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MATRIMONY

BEFORE AND AFTER

A Descriptive Monologue

BY

BOB O'LINK

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Before and After

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MATRIMONY

Accessories.—A desk or table, with a large book open upon it.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The subject of this evening's discourse is Matrimony, considered under its separate divisions of Love, Courtship and Marriage, the three steps by which lunatics and others are led like lambs to the slaughter; and as I know very little about the subject, I have been requested, as the likeliest man to make an ass of myself, to try—as most folk do—to impart to you knowledge which I never possessed myself. You know the sort of knowledge I mean—that which your neighbor slings at you with regard to your own business, which he is sure to know ten times better than you do yourself.

However, seeing that I am so ignorant in this matter, I have consulted a lot of silly authorities, and have collected a whole host of tommy rot with which I propose to electrify you for the next five hours, more or less.

Don't be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen, keep your seats, rest assured refreshments will be handed round in due course, and you are in no immediate danger of the lunatic asylum if you only hang on to your seats while I see what the authorities say. (*Opens large book and commences reading.*)

Ah, here you are. Shakespeare says, "Man has seven ages."

Now, that's all very well for us men, but nobody ever knows how many ages a woman has, *because she never tells the truth about that matter.* (*Speaker ducks his head, with arms posed to ward off an imaginary brick or over-ripe egg. Then regains position and continues.*) It's a fact. I knew a man and woman who were twins. He was forty years old, and when I asked him how old they were he said, "When we were kids, we were the same age; now, sister is five years younger."

That is a digression; I will resume, and it brings me to the first division of my erratic speech devoted to

U. OF ILL. LIB.

LOVE

A celebrated author says, "It is a blood-red flower of the color of sin, but there is always the scent of a god about it."

Now, I don't believe in any such sickly sentimental nonsense. As a matter of fact, *it's a tickling at the heart that you can't scratch.* (*Refer to book again.*)

Another authority says, "Love on the woman's part is the great moving force of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spirit and spring of the universe; it is the whole nature wrapped into one desire."

That sounds well, but what about man? On his part it is *an insane desire to pay for some young woman's board and outfit, winter and summer, with Easter hats thrown in.* (*Refer to book.*)

Another authority says, "The course of true love never runs smooth." Well, that was just my experience until my girl's father became troubled *with the gout in his feet,* and, of course, that altered matters.

Let us take the maiden. Of course, we won't take her very far, for fear of accidents. We will *suppose* she is a blushing maiden of seventeen. Of course this is *only supposition,* because some maidens buy their blushes at the druggists.

I repeat, take the blushing maid of seventeen when she's in love, and see how she *studies economy.* For instance, when she's seated in the parlor with her young man she generally regulates the gas burner so as to save pa's gas bills.

Ah, my friends, when people are in love they do all sorts of silly things. Now, when I was in love, I stood one evening gazing lovingly, longingly in a pie bakery window. The proprietor came out and asked me to move on, and when I asked him why, he said, "Because your face worries my pies."

Of course I was very much annoyed and asked him what was the matter with my face, and he said, "Look here, old chap, here's two dollars for you, go and buy a pistol and shoot the first man you meet whose face is uglier than yours.

Now, I took that as a great insult, *but I also took the two dollars,* and bought a pistol, and the other day I met a young fellow coming along, and I said to him, "Jake, your time has come." He said, "Why what have I done amiss?" I said, "Never mind, I have a mission to fulfill on this earth, and that is to shoot the first man I come across whose face is uglier than mine." He said, "Is mine uglier than yours?" I said, "It is." Then he replied, *"For heaven's sake shoot me."*

Going back, my dear friends, to the subject from which I have wandered like a silly cuckoo, I come to the second division of this nonsensical oration:—

COURTSHIP

Courtship, I can assure you, is the first intoxication of love, and marriage is delirium tremens.

Ah, when you're courting you come across all sorts of critters. For instance, there's the old maid, the young maid, and married men's wives.

Old maids, of course, as a rule, are unmarried.

Do you know, I never sneer at old maids myself. I simply dote upon them, because my mother was one—(*pause*) before she got married.

Then again, when you are courting you have a lovely time. That is, if you are solid with the bull-dog, and keep out of the way of your prospective father-in-law's feet.

When you're courting, never judge a woman's mind by the time it takes her to make it up. It's a great mistake.

Now, I knew a girl who was courting and who was asked if she knew what matrimony meant. Fancy asking a girl a question like that! This girl's mind was evidently wandering—I think she was troubled with religious mania, for according to the authority here (*refer to book*) her reply was, "Yes, sir. It is a state of probation in which men are placed for a time to fit them for a better life." It was not quite the answer expected, but there may be some truth in it.

Some girls are cautious about the man who wants to marry her—properly so, I think, considering— (*Business of ducking head, etc.*). Others, on the contrary, consider it a lottery and jump at the first chance. You know those telephones with a small megaphone attachment? Well, I heard a conversation once—ting a ling a ling, "Is that you, Julia Miggs?" "I reckon it is." "Could you love me?" "I reckon I could." "*Do* you love me?" "I reckon I do." "Could you marry me?" "I reckon I could." "*Will* you marry me?" "I reckon I will, who is it talking to me?" Strange, I waited—no answer—I guess he thought she was too easy. Maybe he fancied if he took her, as the saying goes, for better or worse, she *might* be better, but she *couldn't* be worse. (*Refers to book.*)

Ah! Those love letters! Oh! the gush and mush and silly-billy bosh in them! I knew a girl whose lover used to make crosses on the paper where he had kissed it. At last there

wasn't room for all of them, so he sent her a check for one hundred kisses. She couldn't wait to write to him, she rang him up and said, "I got the check, it was just lovely, and I ran to your friend Jack, across the street, and he cashed it right away."

When I was courting my girl, she used to sing beautifully. One song in particular was "O would I were a bird!" and I often wished she were, with the window open.

By-the-by, I have not told you how I became engaged. You see, I was walking down the street one rainy afternoon, when I saw a young lady going along without an umbrella, and I just stepped up and offered her mine, so, you see, I was *caught in the rain.*

Women, you know, when they're courting, do all sorts of strange things. Have you ever noticed the funny idea they have of wearing their watches in their gloves and on their wrists? Still, there's nothing new under the sun, after all, for I've known them *wear clocks* on their stockings for years.

My girl, you see, had a very dark head of hair, and she wanted to change the color, as many girls do. So she said to me, "Charlie, is it true that champagne will bleach people's hair?" "Well," I answered, "rather—why I've seen lots of people made *absolutely light-headed* by it."

And now, my dear friends, we arrive at that blissful stage which all young folks hanker after, and not a few of the old ones, namely:—

MARRIAGE

Ah, my dear friends, marriage is a *beautiful dream*—(*pause*)—and a *terrible awakening.* (*Business, ducking, etc.*)

I don't mean always, but sometimes. Now, all who have found it so hold up your right hands. What? No one! Some of you haven't woke up yet. Well, it is a committee of two, with power to add to their number.

Just before I got married I went to seek a suitable house. What I wanted was a five-roomed house; a real-estate agent sent me to look at one. I found it five-roomed, as he stated, but it was in a dreadful state of dilapidation, shockingly out of repair. So I went back to the agent, and I said, "Look here, boss, that house is no good to me. I don't want a six-roomed house." Then he argued the point with me, and said, "It is not a six-roomed house." I said, "It is. I know it is because I have been all over it." He said, "Let me see. There's the kitchen, that's one room; the dining-room, that's two; the parlor, that's three; and two bedrooms, that's five. Now, where's

the sixth room?" "Well," I said, "boss, you've forgotten the room for improvement."

When I got married, my wife was simply delighted with the number of wedding presents we received. I was not, because nearly the whole of them came from people who were single, and we've known about it ever since.

I had not been married long before I met a strange woman in the street who glared at me savagely, and when I asked her what she meant, she said, "O, I beg your pardon. I mistook you for my husband." Nice, isn't it?

Now, I believed in beginning as I intended to go on, so when we got home after the honeysuckle, I said to my wife, "Mary dear, let us have a clear understanding. Are you going to be the President or the Vice-President?" And in her sweet and simple way she replied, "Neither, Charlie, I'm *only the Treasurer.*"

After we had been married a short time, she asked me if the dress she had on was a perfect fit. Well, I know it ought to be, because *I* had a *fit* when I paid for it.

A friend of mine came home one day and found his pretty wife in tears. "What's the matter, darling?" said he. "The dog ate up all the lovely cream pudding I made for your dinner," said she. "Never mind," replied he, "dry up your tears, little girl, I'll buy you another dog."

When you're married you come across some charming neighbors. Now, we have one next door, a real cute woman. She can read her husband like a book—and *shut him up as quickly.*

My wife, the silly silly, has gone and paid a hundred dollars for a new set of teeth, and when I told her her face *wasn't worth it,* she hit me on the head with the frying-pan. Makes you skeered of speaking the truth, doesn't it?

Ah, my friends, there's no telling where man might have been had it not been for a woman. To-day we might be peacefully looking about in the Garden of Eden without a single debt, *except gratitude.* Oh, figs!

You see, when a man's been married twenty-five years, that's his silver wedding; when he's been married fifty years, that's his golden wedding; but when his wife dies, that's his jubilee.

Then, when you get married, you are sure to have a mother-in-law. You must be very careful what you call her. I call mine Ma, M-A, Ma. I've lots of other names for her, but I never let her hear them.

My wife and I have been married twenty-five years, and we've never had a row in our house yet. We always go into the back yard—*there's more room.*

Ah, my friends, it's when the babies come that you enjoy mar-

ried life. Only a short time ago our baby was sucking his toes, and my wife said to me, "Charlie, I don't like to see baby do that." "Why, my dear," said I, "that's simply lovely. Can't you see it's a sure sign of thriftiness?" "How do you make that out?" says she. "Why, my dear," says I, "can't you see he's trying to *make both ends meet?"*

My wife is a very *honest* woman, but I am sorry to say she is also very *delicate.* We never have the doctor off our doorstep. Only last week he ordered her to go through my pockets—he thought the *change* would do her good.

In a magazine I recently read an article, "How to Win a Wife." Now, if they will only print another article on "How to Lose a Wife," every married man in the house will buy a copy. Won't you? fellow-victims? (*Business of ducking, etc.*)

And yet I think every man ought to take a wife, or, if he has a deep grudge against himself, let him take a widow, *I* did. I told her I wanted to be the captain of her ship, so that we could sail down life's tossing sea together. She said I was too late for her captain, but I could become her *second mate.*

Well! We could go on all night about woman's perfections, and otherwise. After all said and not said, she is individually and collectively the charm of our lives.

Woman! woman! The idol of our hearts.

(*Declaiming*)

"O Woman! In our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please!"

(*Slyly*) and the ruination of our trouser-pockets. (*Ducking business.*)

By the way, how about those refreshments I promised you? What's the matter with the caterer? I'll have to look him up. (*Goes quickly to exit.*) You needn't wait. Ta, ta. [EXIT.

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